THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): (a) According to the National Remote Sensing Agency, the total area with tree cover in the country for the period 1980—82 was estimated at 46.35 million hectares.

(b) According to the survey done by National Remote Sensing Agency, the rate of forest depletion between 1972—75 and 1980—82 is estimated at 1.3 million hectares per year.

(c) The National Wastelands Development Bord has been set up in 1985 with the object of bringing 5 million hectares of land every year under fuel wood and fodder plantations. A people's movement for afforestation is being developed.

(d) Central Government are not promoting the entry of private companies into afforestation projects on forests lands. The proposals for afforestation of wastelands are being processed by the State Governments concerned.

Solution to Ethnic problem in Sri Lanka

*273. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

SHRI T. R. BALU:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what were the proposals placed by the Indian delegation before the Sri Lankan delegation during the SAARC meet to solve the ethnic crisis;

(b) whether the Sri Lankan delegation placed any counter proposals;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) what was the outcome of these proposals and the dialogue that followed thereafter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) None, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) After the SAARC Summit, further discussions were held at New Delhi and Colombo and a set of proposals had emerged on the 19th December, 1986. Sri Lanka's vacillation about their commitment to these proposals, followed by the imposition of a communication and fuel blockade on Jaffna and military operations in the Eastern and Northern Provinces, has caused us to suspend our good offices.

South-South Cooperation

*274. DR. H. P. SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the South-South Cooperation was mooted to be one of the major planks of discussion at the Harare Summit;

(b) whether any institutionalised format was given to such Cooperation; and

(c) if so, with what results?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A format for South-South Cooperation already existed in the form of the Action Programme for Economic Cooperation (APEC) of the Nonaligned Movement and the Caracas Programme of Action (CPA) of the Group of 77. A separate Plan Action to meet the critical economic situation in Africa had also been adopted in 1985 by the Nonaligned Movement.

The Harare Summit did not create any new institution in the field of South-South Cooperation. It ration-

alised the APEC with a view to improved coordination and implementation and accorded priority to accelerating progress on some important institutions/projects such as the Global System of Trade Preferences among developing countries, the Centre for Science and Technology and the Research and information System of Nonaligned and other developing countries.

(c) in pursuance of a decision of the Harare Summit, an Extraordinary Ministerial Conference on South-South Cooperation to be held in June, 1987, will review progress since the Summit.

Foreign involvement in insurgent activities

*275. SHRI CHITTA BASU:

SHRI RAMKRISHNA MAZUMDER:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been spurt in insurgency activities by T.N.V. (Tripura), U.L.F.A. (Assam), P.L.A. (Manipur) and N.S.C.N. (Nagaland) in recent times;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for such spurt; and

(c)what step Government propose to take to curb such activities?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) and (b) 'TNV' in Tripura, 'National Socialist Council of Nagalnd' in Nagaland and Manipur and the 'United Liberation Front of Assam' in Assam have been active for the following reasons:

(i) To boost the morale of their organisations and personnel;

(ii) To replenish their losses in terms of material and resources;

(iii) To maintain their militant image;

(iv) To create tension between tribals and non tribals in Tripura.

(c) The Government have already taken steps to check the activities of extremists which include:

1. Utilisation of the powers under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, where necessary;

2. Gearing up the intelligence net-work.

3. Arrangements for better co-ordination between different agencies involved in the operations against the extremists;

4. Increase in the vigil on the border.

5. Strengthening of para-military forces suitably where necessary.

Projects from Orissa pending clearance

*276. KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) how many projects from Orissa have been received by the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 during the last three years;

(b) how many cases have been rejected and the reasons therefor;

(c) how many cases are still pending for disposal and since when they are pending; and

(d) in how many cases administrative sanction was issued and the work has started?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): (a) 34 proposals for